

a2 26. (Amended) The method of Claim 23, wherein said symbiotic bacteria is selected from the group consisting of *Bacillus cereus*, *Citrobacter intermedius*, *Acetobacter methanolicus*, *Thermothrix thiopara*, *Phormidium*, *Oscillatoria*, *Mastigocladus*, *Thiobacillus ferrooxidans*, *Thiobacillus*, *Thiooxidans*, *Bacillus lichenformis*, *Bacillus BKPM 4368*, *Pedomicrobium* and *Bacillus subtilis*.

28. (Amended) A method of recovering gold from sea water, comprising:
contacting a sponge having a symbiotic relationship with *Pedomicrobium* with said sea water; and
recovering concentrated gold from said sponge.

a 29. (Amended) A method of recovering metals and minerals from sea water, comprising:
contacting a sponge having a symbiotic relationship with *Cyanobacteria* with said sea water; and
recovering concentrated metal or mineral from said sponge.

a 31. (Amended) A method of recovering metals and minerals from sea water, comprising:
cultivating sponges having a symbiotic relationship with bacteria in a sponge bed, said bacteria being capable of accumulating said metal or mineral;
permitting said metal or mineral to accumulate; and
recovering concentrated metal or mineral from said sponges.